

Commander's Connection



Photo by Staff Sgt. Lee Watts

Col. Sam Angelella and 20th Operations Support Squadron air traffic controllers officially open Shaw's Air Traffic Control Tower simulator Wednesday.

"Commander's Connection" is a link between Col. Sam Angelella, 20th Fighter Wing commander, and the Shaw community. Questions or concerns that can't be resolved through normal channels can be called in and recorded at 895-4611 or e-mailed to commandersconnection@shaw.af.mil.

*Callers should leave a name and telephone number in case questions need clarification. Comments of general interest may be published in **The Shaw Spirit**.*

Q My husband and I have always been encouraged to report any activity that seems suspicious. We live on base and recently, I saw a man walk past the window in my backyard very close to the house. I was concerned and confronted him. He said he was marking the cables underground, but was wearing no uniform, no badge, no hat with a symbol or anything stating who he was or what he was doing. I was concerned by the incident, so I reported it.

A Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address this issue. The civil service employee you spoke with was from the 20th Civil Engineer Squadron Exterior Electrical shop. He was spotting lines for a telephone contractor when you saw him in your yard.

All 20th CES employees have been reminded of the requirement to wear a squadron hat or display their identification card when working in base housing.

Freedom isn't free: Remember the sacrifice

By Chief Master Sgt. William Miller
U.S. Central Command Air Forces

For the past 31 years I have worn a uniform, served our country and witnessed a lot of changes.

I've seen the bombing of North Vietnam in action. In March 1973, we lined the streets at Sheppard Air Force Base to welcome home our prisoners of war. At that time, people were demonstrating against the war in Vietnam.

Later, we changed utility uniforms from green fatigues to the battle dress uniform, and our blues from wool to polyester and now to a blend of both. The quality movement came along which forced us to look at and eliminate processes that added no value to our operations.

Additionally, Air Expeditionary Forces were born as a means to standardize rotations to Operations Northern and Southern Watch.

On Sept. 11, 2001, America endured terrorist attacks which in turn motivated a resurgence of patriotism.

I was on my way to San Diego when we captured Saddam. In all my uniform travels, I cannot recall anyone ever coming up and shaking my hand to say thank you for serving this country, until that trip. That day, people told me how

proud they were of what I do.

Recently, I sat down by a young woman holding her baby. She was traveling with her parents, who were helping her move to Germany to be with her husband, who had been in the Army only five months. She said she was fearful of what living outside the United States would be like. I told the family Germany was a good place to live and you could visit many countries and see a lot of sights while there. The family asked how long I had been in the military and why I served so many years. I told them it was an honor to serve our great nation and be part of the team keeping them free. By this time, others were listening. I saw one person wipe away a tear. The young woman's dad said, "Most Americans take for granted the freedom we have and haven't taken the time to realize it isn't free." How true that statement is.

We should all think about how many came before us who made that ultimate sacrifice and gave their life for the freedom we enjoy.

As I head into Southwest Asia on this flight, I can't help but think about the many adventures and flights I have been a part of the past 31 years. This trip seems extra special because it will be my last. I look around a cabin filled with families and people from many nations.

Anyone who has deployed to places like Somalia, Afghanistan or Vietnam can tell you seeing children suffer is one of the most difficult parts of fighting wars. Many die never having a chance to grow up and enjoy the freedom we have. I have seen them standing along the road or in doorways, some with clothes, some without; most just wanting something to eat and a place to lay their head.

I remember sitting in Southwest Asia waiting for Operation Iraqi Freedom to start. We were called together for a quick staff meeting and told operations would soon begin. We were to say a prayer for those who were going north, because there could be those who would not return. In battle, everyone is touched.

Every time I step on American soil, I get goose bumps. For that moment, I think how our fighting forces must feel when they come home. Words never convey how they feel when a loved one welcomes them with open arms. I know that feeling because my wife has been there every time for the past 31 years.

As I leave this Air Force, I remember we pay a high price for freedom. Service members must continue to serve this great nation, stand tall and wear the uniform with honor.

The Shaw Spirit

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